

## NOTE ON PORTHEUS AUSTRALIS, A. S. Woodward.\*

BY H. A. LONGMAN.

IN response to a series of letters sent out by the Director, the Queensland Museum has recently received several new collections of fossils. Two of these are of exceptional interest, as they represent Teleostean fishes of which, so far, only very fragmentary or distorted remains have been found. These specimens have been kindly forwarded by Mr. S. Dunn from Lower Cretaceous beds near Hughenden in the vicinity of Flinders River.

The larger specimen was forwarded with one lateral surface almost completely covered with a matrix of fine hard limestone, in which were lying several *Inoceramus* shells, whilst on the reverse side was exposed a large conical tooth. Fortunately we were able to cut away the matrix to a great extent, and the maxillæ and dentaries were exposed. As a result we have no hesitation in identifying our specimen with *Porthcus australis*, A. S. Woodward, the type of which came from the same district, and which, through the courtesy of Mr. B. Dunstan, Queensland Government Geologist, we have had an opportunity of examining.

Mr. R. Etheridge, junr., has described under the name of *Ichthyodectes marathonsis*† another specimen from an adjoining locality, which he says "bears a very suspicious resemblance" to *Porthcus australis*. But Mr. Etheridge's species was described from a skull "crushed from above downward," in which the premaxillæ and anterior teeth are missing. He expressed the opinion that *Porthcus australis* possibly could be referred to the allied genus *Ichthyodectes*, in which the anterior teeth are not enlarged. Our example is of some interest because it contains remains of both upper and lower anterior teeth, which are relatively very large. The maxillæ exposed in this specimen are barely  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length. The right side exhibits remains and alveoli representing about twenty-four teeth, a part being still obscured by the hard matrix. Owing to the abrasions of the upper surface of the right maxilla and the consequent partial exposure of the alveoli, it would be difficult to estimate the real length of the teeth above the original margin. In their present state the larger teeth in the middle of the maxilla are 15 mm. in length, whereas the exposed part of the lower anterior tooth is much more robust and is 20 mm.

\* Woodward—Ann. Mag. Nat. His., ser. 6, xiv (1894), p. 444, plate x, figs. 1, 1a.

† Records Aus. Mus., vol. vi, pt. i, p. 5 (1905) plates i & ii.

Remains of two upper teeth are shown in the matrix in the region of the premaxilla. One of these is very stout, the oval section being 7 mm. in diameter. Our specimen thus confirms the original generic classification of the type. The Family *Saurodontidae* having been restricted by Crook to the genera *Saurocephalus*, Harlan, and *Saurodon*, Hays, these specimens should be placed in the Family *Ichthyodectidae*, Crook.\*

Our specimens show several of the bones of the head in fair condition, the longitudinal crest being well marked. In the posterior upper portion of the fossil remains of several vertebræ may be distinguished. Comment on these and other features must be left for more expert hands. In the second specimen received from Mr. Dunn, the jaws are more fragmentary, and the dentition does not contain the anterior teeth. It is hoped that further examples from the same district will be shortly available, in order that duplicates of these interesting fishes may be secured for other institutions.

---

\* Zittel—Textbook of Palæontology, vol. ii, 1902, p. 95.

---